

To Whom it May Concern:

We are writing in response to the reopening of the Copperflats Mine Project and how its operation will directly affect the environment, small businesses, farms and our livelihood.

First, the water usages required will deplete the water in an area all ready in need for it. A third of all groundwater used in Sierra County will be used up and not returned due to pollution. The yearly rainfall averages is 12 inches and only 3% goes to replenishing the aquifer. The mine's use will drain the domestic and artesian wells so dramatically this will affect everything and everyone living off of it. The Rio Grande, Elephant Butte Lake, Caballo Reservoir will all be affected. Including the largest *Platanus wrightii* (Arizona Sycamore) grove in New Mexico. The trees provide habitat for rare birds which brings tourism to the area, as bird watchers flock here. Animas Creek Nursery, a small business thriving off the artesian water uses green practices to ensure the most efficient ways to irrigate are used. The mine will put them out of business. They cannot operate if the groundwater levels drop.

Secondly, this is an economic and as an environmental issue. The jobs the mine does provide will not be permanent, the newspaper has said 270 permanent construction jobs, but the probability of those jobs being given to locals is low. Just because the money to be made by the natural resources mined is greater than that coming in from tourism in the area, does not mean it is not of any value. We thrive here and want to continue to and it is completely negligent for a large corporation to come in and completely take the away from hard working farmers, ranchers, small business owners just trying to survive.

Thirdly, the issue of pollution is evident with irreversible consequences. There are well documented cases in northern New Mexico of mines polluting the rivers the streams and having to be drained as a result. This could happen to Animas Creek and Caballo Lake which would desecrate tourism and peoples' livelihood in the area.

In conclusion, our natural resources are of value but are better left untouched. It is not worth destroying the environment, sources of drinking and irrigation water, habitats, tourism, and people's livelihood's, and world's famous chile. There is more at risk then to gain by going forward. The consequences will be felt years in the future when the dollar signs outweigh the people's screaming voices all for the sake of making a buck. There must be a better way.

Sincerely,

The Wood Family

Preserve our natural resources for generations to come!